

Bees  
from an  
Undergraduate  
Bonnet

by  
L S Bishop

PR  
6003  
.1764  
B33  
1829



Even nouns

-Leslie Brinkley

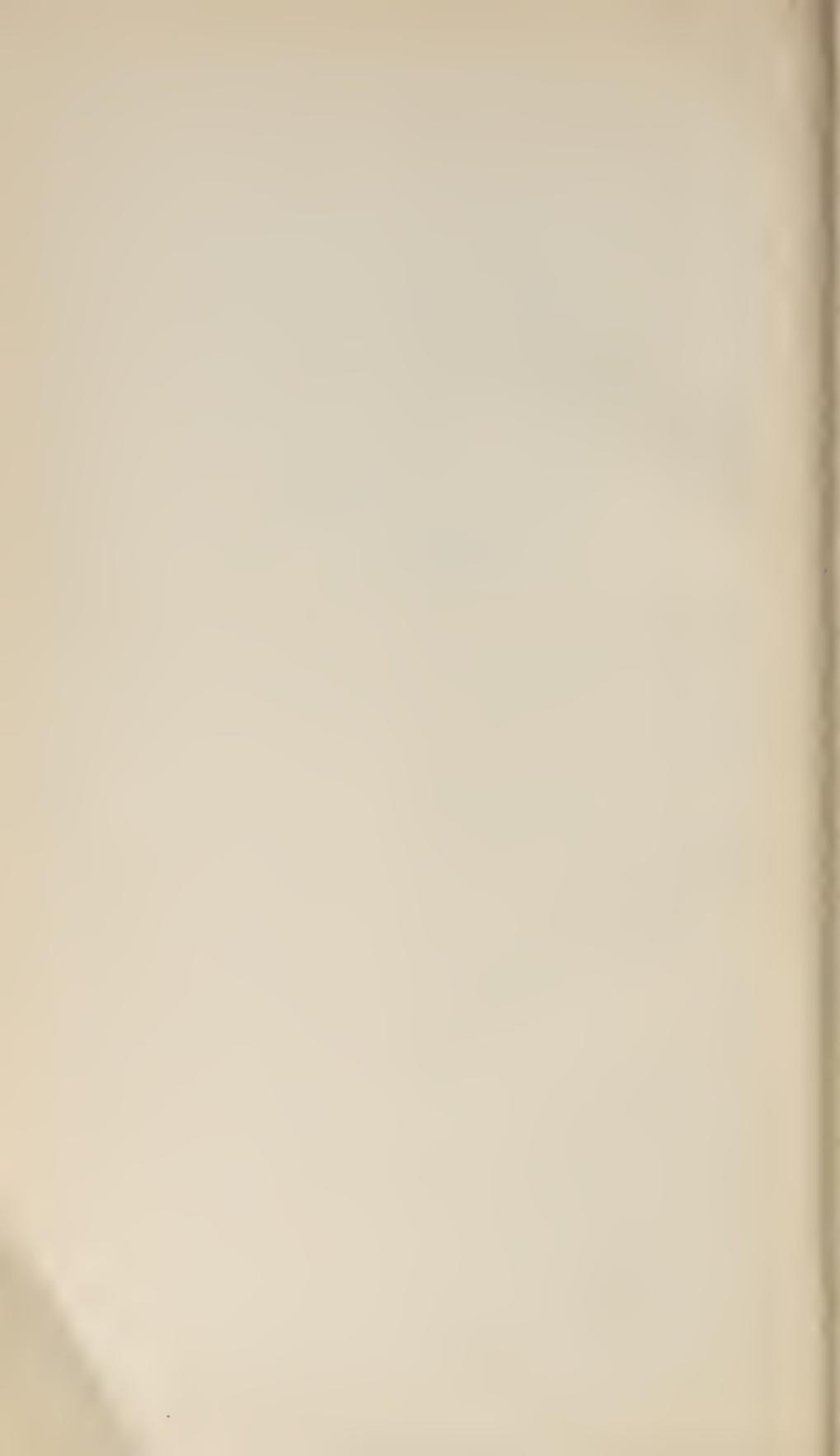
Walters p. 604

• 45<sup>00</sup>

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019 with funding from  
Kahle/Austin Foundation

<https://archive.org/details/beesfromundergra0000bish>

BEES FROM AN  
UNDERGRADUATE  
BONNET



# BEES FROM AN UNDERGRADUATE BONNET

LESLIE BISHOP

Scholar of St. John's College, Oxford

"L'audace, Encore l'audace, Toujours l'audace."

*G. J. Danton.*

BASIL BLACKWELL · OXFORD  
1929

Thomas J. Bata Library  
TRENT UNIVERSITY  
PETERBOROUGH, ONTARIO

PR 6003 2161. 655  
129

*Printed in Great Britain at the Vincent Works, Oxford.*

IN MEMORY OF YOUTH  
AND THE  
FRIENDS OF MY YOUTH  
AND THE  
DAYS WHEN "ALL THE WORLD WAS YOUNG."  
TO  
THADE PILICHOWSKI  
BOTH A POLE AND A JEW,  
ONE OF THE MOST KIND AND CANDID  
FRIENDS MAN EVER HAD,  
AND,  
WITH CONFIDENCE,  
TO  
MY FRIEND, KEITH UNWIN,  
WHO SAID  
"There is only one original thing left to be done  
and that is not to die. I intend to have a pretty  
good stab at that."



## CONTENTS.

	Page
Apology	9
Foreword	13
On leaving Rugby	15
A Letter to one going to a University	19
One way of justifying the League of Nations	27
A Sense of Proportion	34
Madness	41
The Twentieth Century	45
Jehovah; or the Future of God	53
The Monastic Idea	65
Dancing	69
"The light that never was on sea or land"	71
Speech to the Charles Fox Association	75
Action—an English poem	81
As they are	87
"... To Sleep"	99



## APOLOGY.

WHY should I “wait a few years”? I might die to-morrow. I have already waited a good many. And how much writing either of the temporal or eternal sort do my advisers think would have ever been done, if the writers had always taken the advice of their elders and betters and “waited a few years.” They would simply have waited and become elder and better, until in the subconscious poetry of the English people, they were “blue in the face.”

Why should I not write *now*, before I become a professional and therefore of necessity a more one-sided, less complete man? If I am to be a fit person to write for the public in a few months when I

have a degree, why am I not a fit person now? Because I write badly? But judging from what is published you are much more entitled to publication if you write badly than if you write well. Because people do not read essays? Their grandfathers both read essays and wrote English. The twentieth century is not in itself any reason why they should do neither. Because I am not "mature"? Surely it is obvious by the law of growth that nobody is. It would be far ruder to say I was. What value have opinions that cannot be changed? Because I am young and unknown simply? I should have thought it was obvious that because I am young I must be unknown. That because I am unknown and, to live, must become known I am bound to give others something to know me by. I could understand being reluctant to get published, if I had written well for the public in the past and had a standard to maintain. Indeed I could imagine myself being unwilling to

be so fashionable as to give interviews to the Sunday papers, if I were a great writer, who unless he was careful might say something silly and let himself down. But my worst enemy would allow me that neither of these is the case.

Lastly in my very humble opinion, joyful writing is better for the world than sad writing. (I know incidentally that writing for the good of the world, is not supposed to be artistic. If this is so, which I doubt, then to hell with Art!) And I think one is more likely to write joyfully, when one is young and knows what joy is than when one is old and professes to have forgotten. I know it may be objected against me that I have not had much experience of life. And if everything is to be measured in days and nights, this may be true. "Experience of life" people tell me "is the only thing that really counts." If I were older, they will say I should not write like this. That is precisely why I write now. I find that

when people grow older they tell you, from their experience of life, that life is a sad thing. I wish to tell them from my experience of it, that it is a joyful thing, to tell them in no uncertain manner, so as to be able, if I ever doubt it, to remind my experienced elder and better self, which may be warped in the course of waiting those “few years” that in my raw and foolish days at all events, I was “bumptious” enough to declare myself “a young man, full of bright hopes.”

## FOREWORD.

I APOLOGISE humbly for obtruding my unutterable philosophy upon a respectable public. This I do, not because I expect them to take it too seriously, nor because I take it too seriously myself, but first because I am poor and wish to marry, secondly because I may be able to help them by speaking for at least one, however unreliable person, who has heard an intelligent doctor admit that all the ultimate problems are insoluble, who has known Labour to love Capital and Capital to love Labour, who has found even railwaymen contented with their lot seen beauty in the face of the miner and ugliness writ large in the fashionable columns of the daily press: and thirdly

because they are the only friends, whom I am not ashamed to ask and who are able certainly to help me.

I exaggerate, but exaggeration is characteristic of youth. I contradict myself in different essays, but what is wrong in stating two views of the same question when there are certainly two and possibly three? I am illogical but logic, after all, is not everything, as we are so apt to imagine. The forces of history have been swayed as much through the hearts as through the heads of the men who made it, thank God. It is as possible to be above logic as below it. Scientists are always discovering, as if for the first time, that logic can prove black white or God non-existent. And yet being human logic, it is as liable to err as anything about us and as being itself material can hardly be set up as the perfect criterion of things which, if they are at all, cannot but be spiritual.

L. G. B.

## ON LEAVING RUGBY.

*By permission of the Editor of the "Rugbeian."*

AND now, gentlemen, the game is in your hands. It will now be a matter of hours before we pass out of your lives and you pass out of ours. We shall be of the Past ; you will be of the Present. You will signify ; we shall not signify. You may possibly have a chance of seeing us again ; of showing us how much better you get on without us ; of refusing our Oxford chocolates, if we bring them ; but never again will you have a chance of knowing us. Never again shall we be able to breathe the air you breathe ; dream the dreams you dream and hear the laughter that springs only in your midst. When

next roses bloom in the Crescent and blossoms fire the trees of the Head Master's garden, our footsteps will have inevitably disappeared through the whole length and breadth of the Barby Road.

Perhaps we have helped to make you what you are, even if you don't like it. Perhaps we have lived for you and loved you, even if you don't realise it or don't want to realise it or consider it undesirable or amusing. Even if we have chastised you as well.

We have, then, failed utterly, gentlemen. We are at all events agreed upon that, are we not? Now it is for you to succeed. You have sometimes misunderstood us. Be very sure then that you always understand yourselves. You will not have much time for criticism after this. Nor will you, let us hope, waste as much breath over your critics as we have over ours.

Do not imagine we really think the sun will shine on you any the less

brightly, because our ways may soon be continents apart. Do not believe we think you a whit less capable than any one of us whatever. We are not quite so intolerably arrogant as to expect you to do as well as we have done. We expect you to do better, *worlds* better.

Vorwarts! then, in the words of the proud Midland motto. Arise, shine, for your light is come! It is to you now that souls unborn are crying:

“Be brave that we may conquer,  
Fight that we may prevail!”

It is for you to live, for yours is the fulness of life, so that you at least may aspire to be

*Men who never turned their back, but marched breast forward,*  
*Never doubted clouds would break,*  
*Never dreamed, though right were worsted — wrong*  
*would triumph.*  
*Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, Sleep*  
*to wake!*



## A LETTER TO ONE GOING TO A UNIVERSITY.

MY DEAR YOUNG MAN,

As you may have seen the very striking photograph of that business man, which is periodically inserted in the daily newspapers under the heading "The University Man who succeeded in After Life," and as all your friends are going straight to sit on stools, because there is no "useful knowledge" about how one may best sit and keep sitting on stools to be gained at a University, I think I ought to warn you of what your father calls the Perils of University Life.

I had better tell you at once that undergraduate is ipso facto a term of abuse, though allowance is made in the case of

prominent undergraduates such as the Royal Family, the Labour Party and the mass of your fellow men.

You will perceive, of course, in your first term that the inexcusable variety of undergraduate is either intelligent but long-haired, in which case he will wear horn-rimmed spectacles, be an Indian or speak at the Union, or not intelligent but with his hair shaved very largely off on the familiar principle that it is natural and should therefore be concealed, and in this case he will address himself to his affairs and make love in characteristic Anglo-Saxon monosyllables such as "Golf, Muck, Bug, etc., etc."\* He is a very good fellow really and will spend whole days paying this same compliment to others, who are more powerful or fatter than

\* For the benefit of those who think I mean everything that I say and for the benefit of those who think I mean nothing that I say, I here think it proper to state that I record this well-known idea of the Aesthete and the Athlete, not so much because I believe it as because I think it is funny.

their neighbours or have a greater capacity for being ordinary or supremely unwise.

Your first, very natural mistake will be to think that your scout is your tutor. But this will be all to the good as it goes to teach you the right atmosphere, because, although you will probably be forced to attend most of the celebrations that you do attend of that religion "whose service is perfect freedom," it will be to your scout that you are ultimately morally responsible. He will always call you at half past seven. If you ask to be called at 8, he will awake you at 7.30, saying briefly, "It will be 8 in half an hour." He will remind you of such little details as whether you have had (or need) a bath, are fittingly dressed or in a good temper. Whatever trouble you fall into, it will always be outclassed by the trouble into which he may fall, through your having fallen into it. He will do all this like the perfect servant he is, without worrying you in the slightest.

You will be fortunate if your tutor, who can hardly fail to be a nice man, is not at times too academic to be intelligent, too logical to be reasonable, and still more fortunate if he has a strong and sensible woman for his wife. You will be fortunate too if he realises that it is more important for you to learn to live usefully than to learn certain devices by which you may obtain a good degree and do honour to him as an individual and as a class; one of which devices may sooner or later be that supreme selfishness and unsociability that is so often a means to and an effect of real academic success and consists somewhat in an intensifying facility for appreciating the perfect rightness of things as they are and of itself as it is. This, in its more harmless form, is what leads men who "did so well at school" to unsex themselves by investigating the lesser Roses of Assyria or the young of every species but their own. That is where your friends' supreme wis-

dom in going straight to their stools comes in.

You will soon become aware of the time-honoured methods, which from the Middle Ages have been thought proper to the orderly living of a university and which are administered by gentlemen dressed in a peculiar manner in order to show that tradition makes them professionally unable to understand how young men really behave and why they behave at all.

For goodness sake do not approach the University with the idea that women undergraduates are wrong. This misconception arises from the fact that during lectures they are rendered sexually hideous by statute. The reason they look so bad is partly because they are in black and partly because they are trying to mean well intellectually and endeavouring to take a human interest in persons and things which are generally regarded by the other sex as both uninteresting and inhuman. They live in that diffused

atmosphere of chaste service, which is only produced by bed-sitting rooms and elder and better people whose chastity is none the less spiritual for being inevitable. Therefore great allowance must be made for them, and you have only to see them in evening dress to make it with a vengeance.

In conclusion there is only one thing worse than doing too little work and that is doing too much.

And lastly, you will find that all types of undergraduate are less terrible and self-restraining people than you and your fellow grandes were at your public school.

You will find that they are bumptious and will, I hope, admit in all honesty, as they do, that you are young and therefore become bumptious yourself.

You will find that they do not take severe views of life and think, with the Home Secretary, that a figure is a criminal offence (though they quite understand why he does, poor man).

You will find also that they will, in the end, take you for precisely what you are and be kind to you with the kindest heart in the world, whatever you are.

In fact you will, in my humble opinion, be an unreasonable person if you do not come away convinced that the kingdom of heaven is not unlikely to be an undergraduate affair.



## ONE WAY OF JUSTIFYING THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

"I am proud of my father, because he went to prison for telling men not to kill each other."

*Bertrand Russell's son.*

MAN was originally a citizen of the cave. He became first a citizen of the village, then a citizen of the county and lastly a citizen of the country. He has yet to become the most important—a citizen of the world.

Do not let any unimaginative boor sneer at pacifism. It is an infinitely nobler thing to let live than to kill, to love your neighbour than to hate him, to trade with him than to turn your guns upon him. Guns are expensive.

If the nation stood committed to a war by men whose judgement I could not accept, and if I or some other sentimental fool was brave enough to stand up in the face of the nation and say: "For humanity's sake think twice before you do this," do not let him denounce it as the action of a coward, when he knows that he would never dare to do it himself.

Do not let him imagine that we are more afraid to give our lives than our fathers. Let him only make himself well aware of the fact that we at least do not wish them to have died in vain and would not be afraid to think before we did.

He would probably disapprove of pacifism under these circumstances for two reasons. He would describe my action as unpatriotic. He would do this because the popular press has been for years confounding patriotism with unfaltering acquiescence in the decisions of those who guide the country in times of peril—"my country right or wrong," shriek the papers,

and many of its citizens, too stupid or too selfish or too ignorant to think about the question for themselves, take it for granted. Now however clever it may be thought to reproach men who have changed their political views, can anyone honestly think that any political party is infallible, especially at precisely these sort of crises? And does anyone really believe it is the best way of loving his country to be blind to mistakes, which they might have foreseen had they taken the trouble (not that our politicians are not worthy men but because many heads are better than few), to be blind when they are made and when Europe is ringing with them? Surely the love of one's country might be a better thing than this?

Or he would disapprove of my pacifism because I was a young man and too optimistic. Because we could not do without war. Ever since the world began we have had it. Because if we disarmed ourselves before any other nation, it wouldn't

30      ONE WAY OF JUSTIFYING  
disarm, and sooner or later we should be  
let down.

As regards the first criticism I should say that, although pessimism may be the birthright of those who have seen things as they really are, I shall always prefer to believe it belongs to those who have utterly failed to see all that is worth seeing, simply because they have not had the courage to look.

The argument that war is inevitable produces the same impression as does the memory of a famous lecture which in August, 1914, was to have been but never was given at Rugby on the inevitability of peace. War is quite simply a relic of barbarism and it will never be anything else. The Great War does not in the least affect the truth of this remark or make it absurd. It is quite as stupid to say that because there have been wars in history there will always be, as to maintain that because Sir Henry Hawkins traded in slaves, slavery is and will always

be an unavoidable evil or that, because we once thought the sun went round the earth, it still does. Funnily enough even another war would not destroy my hopes of the League of Nations. People who scoff at it ought to try to remember that they are not the last word in everything. Each generation since Adam has probably thought this of themselves. We do not stand at the very end of things but, probably, nearer the very beginning. Given grace by the Great Pyramid and the American astronomers, this world of ours has probably got quite as far to go as it has already gone. The only question is are our friends going to stay as they are and make their sons waste time doing the work or are they going to try to improve in this direction here and now? Cussedly enough I believe in evolution.

Now his last argument was this. If we disarmed before any other nation it would be "hopelessly impracticable." All the greatest deeds of history have been

considered “hopelessly impracticable” until they have been done—from Christianity to flying the Atlantic. If we disarmed like this, our friend goes on, we should be in the lamentable position of trusting some other nation not to let us down! Let us rather suspect it of being untrustworthy. If we do, we at least shall not be disappointed by its being anything else! People used to behave in this childish sort of way, but they might be beyond it now. Did it ever enter our friend’s mind that if one thing is proved equally by all human experience and common sense, Christianity or no Christianity, it is that the best way to make your neighbour trust you is to trust him?

And if he did let us down, wouldn’t it be quite as good a thing to die for the world as to die for your country, to give up your life to show that you trusted your neighbour rather than that you hated him? I would be proud to think that your and my weapons of defence were

shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And do you suppose that world public opinion, venerating the words on your grave, would be likely to let anyone do that sort of thing again?

"All very well," says our militant friend with an overfed smile, "under those circumstances the result would not much matter to me." You, my dear fellow, as you ought really to have gathered by now, don't matter at all. If you did something of that sort you might.

## A SENSE OF PROPORTION.

BLESSED was Sir Patrick Hastings sketching while his rival attempted for three hours to fog the issue at the Savidge tribunal, blessed is the man who realises that one glass of port is more to be appreciated than three, for they have a sense of proportion. So many people have not.

I have heard many brilliant scholars say in effect and one exactly: "Now of course everything except the baser passions started with Greece and Rome." I doubt if the peoples whose life made up the greater part of this world's history, the Assyrians, the Hebrews, the Egyptians and far beyond would like that.

In the same way, it is no use thinking

London is the whole country, because if you do you forget the truth of Miss Loos' remark "London is really nothing" and you overlook Blackpool. But seriously, the country is not here to serve London, as some of its inhabitants think, it is there to serve the country.

Old ladies have told me that every one of their sorrows was sent with a purpose, every one of the measles had its point. Members of Parliament have written books on the strength of a ten days' visit to India.

We all seem afflicted by this disease in some ways. We have a habit of referring to each of our acquaintances from time to time during their life, and all the time after their death as "Poor so and so." Let us observe a sweet reasonableness in these matters and grasp little truths as, for instance, that a rowing man need never fear death. Rowing is so much more unpleasant.

When we talk about the last War, and

the less we talk about it the better, don't let us take the line "I shall never forgive the Germans because they took Uncle Bill." The whole matter is one of the completest indifference to Uncle Bill now. Besides which, were the truth known, we never attached such a phenomenal value to "poor Bill" before they took him. Indeed it is even possible that he did not very much mind about being taken. And under the circumstances they could not very well help taking him. After all we took Uncle Fritz.

When we talk about Socialism, in our own country, if we ever do, couldn't we remember that it has nothing to do with Russia and needn't infallibly be unmentionable if it had? When we discuss Bolshevism with refugee priests and monarchist propagandists, it might be well to bear in mind that if one thing is certain about Russia it is that no government at least could have been worse than the Tzarist régime and we had better

go and see the other side of the question for ourselves, before our book on it is actually published.

I always wonder whether the Head-master who expels boys for offences which he has committed himself, perhaps more successfully and deceitfully, has a sense of proportion. Or the clergy and laity who turn the Church into a bear-garden by squabbles over minutiae in the Prayer Book, which ought not materially to affect the Church of Christ. It perhaps shows that their religion is a living thing and perhaps also that, in some respects, it were better dead.

Has the Law always a sense of proportion? Does the judge in a murder case ever ask himself whether the law which says two deaths for one death is right, whether it is not out of date for our civilisation to-day, or has he got so used to administering it fervently that he cannot but think it great, wonderful and holy? (Poor man, he probably never had

time not to!) The old Jewish idea of justice may or may not have been an eye for an eye. The modern Christian idea is certainly two eyes for an eye, not to mention the counsels fees of about his own weight in gold. Does it ever occur to his lordship in his private capacity that the person murdered was frequently highly undesirable and that the murderer's service in removing him might almost equal the judge's service, when the murderer is removed; if indeed society is served by either? And does he not consider that however desirable it is for the community to be protected, however unpleasant it may be to be murdered, it is far more than equally unpleasant to be tried for murder, kept in suspense about being tried for murder and finally executed for murder. The punishment does not fit the crime when it has been done and when it has not, it doesn't fit anything whatever. "Haven't you done enough?" said Mrs. Pace after the drawn-out agony of an

*Note on Sir Walter Raleigh's beard, p. 39.*

Some historians take the view that as Sir Walter had but an imperial, he could not have laid it aside. Others hold that it was a spiritual beard to which he referred, when quoting Sir Thomas More's well-known words. This involves a discussion of the whole theory of the creeping or relative beard in the 16th century. Interesting as this may be, we cannot go into it here, as we have better things to do.



inquest of weeks—"Haven't you done enough to this pathetic rag of humanity?" Quite enough. Murderess or no, hadn't they done enough, more than enough, seventy times seven too much. Cruelty is inexcusable. "She might have murdered a husband who must have justice," you will tell me. "The cruelty was unavoidable." "What in God's name, could he have to do with it?" I answer to one. And "Do not lie" to the other. No murderer but can serve society in some way too well for extinction. "Spare my beard at least" said Sir Walter Raleigh "that has not committed treason."

But would not the person who attacked our Headmasters, Bishops and Judges as representing anything but good systems, taking them all in all; be losing his sense of proportion still worse?

At the same time it is no use imagining that we are the only people in the world. The profoundest lesson of history is to learn how very insignificant we are. Our

40 A SENSE OF PROPORTION.

portion is a fraction of a second in the Clock of Time, a grain of the infinite Sands of Space.

## MADNESS.

SHE looked as though she might see some great coffin perpetually among the shadows. She walked as one walks, whose dearest friends are become active enemies, as one who has terrified those who have known and loved them best, but who has been quite unable to help it. It was as if she had the additional pain of knowing people thought she was wild.

It would have surprised you to be told that she had once been young—burningly young. That there had once been somebody, who cared how she looked. She kept her eyes in the circle of dim town-lights in which she moved. Sometimes she went up to a policeman and said “Let us pray.” She did not see the stars.

She was not happy? How could she be? Who could expect it? Who ever was? Not even in the recollection of misty years, wherein stood prominent her achievements like gilded cupolas. And she would certainly be no happier in the tomb, when it was all ended, where there was nothing but sheer vacuity and dumbness.

Other women there were of her age, who still lived respectably among soft carpets and old trees. They were very uninteresting but had money and were looked after. Few hated them. None loved them. It was hardly edifying to contemplate such a sight. She saw them as skeleton leaves, blown onto dust heaps by the wind, years before when their life left them, while she was tossed on. And she could not bear it, because she was different.

And yet she was no cynic. She had not, at the beginning, been at all a disbeliever in God. Perhaps it was that

she thought too much about her soul; that she allowed herself to suffer too much. Perhaps the night wind was a sycophant when it sang to her of the things she could have been; a liar when it whispered the thing she was—the things all men were. Probably. It was not right for her to let her imagination carry her to depths like these. It was not right for her to forget what she owed to society. It was not right that she should tempt God. No doubt it was wrong for her to be alone.

Soon they would come and drive her away, terrified and terrifying, whither she knew not. Only she knew there would be long days of captivity at the end of the journey.

Her pain may have been due to too much Victorian restraint, just as the pain of an unfortunate girl may be due to too little of it. It may have been due to the violation of some law of the body. At all events it was difficult to pretend it

was good for her. Pain had made her beauty ugliness, her religion mania. From being a saintly woman, she had become by pain a lower grade of creature. Through her pain her son became harder, through her suspiciousness more deceitful. Pain snatched from him the person upon whom for him goodness seemed to depend and made her a frightening thing that must be taken away as soon as possible.

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

A FEW months ago, when for the second time in my life, I lectured to a girls' school, the elderly headmistress, after having made at supper the horrible discovery that I was an undergraduate, turned to me on our way to the hall, as only head-mistresses who have made horrible discoveries can turn, and said, as I repeated to her pupils a few minutes later "My dear young man, do you suppose that thirty years ago your father would have been allowed to come to a girls' school and give a lecture on the 'Age of Science and Steel'?" That, I told them, was their headmistresses' and my measure of the importance of the 20th century.

Proceeding on my horrible way, I told them that its great characteristic was Speed. I had experienced this in cars, in an aeroplane and in various other ways and hoped to have the horrible opportunity of doing so on a motor bicycle. I could not see why in itself speed was an evil. Did it not save time? Did it not encourage people to travel, when they could cross the world in a week; to get out of their own nice little stuffy little island? Did it not help them to meet their fellow men, to realise perhaps that they were worth meeting, and in the end possibly, worth loving?

Look at the aeroplane. What a significant thing it already is. It annihilates the natural barriers that have cost so much blood and inconvenience. A train must keep to the rails, a car to the roads, a boat to the water, but an aeroplane can go anywhere. We have seen it taking food to snow-bound villages and flying over an unsailable Channel quite lately.

What a much more significant thing it would be if one day it got, as it may, to Mars. How small we should feel. Especially if we found that the Martians were more civilised than we were or, better still, didn't believe in civilisation at all! How ridiculous we should loom if we found out that there were as many more worlds, as stars in the heaven—we and our attempts to disprove God mathematically, our superiority complexes and individualities!

And then turn to another very characteristic feature that can ring the earth in a few seconds—wireless telephony. The aeroplane and the wireless wave discount Space and Time. Both are vast potentialities for the future. Wireless may become a potentiality for the past. Sound, once created, we learn never dies but vibrates for ever through space. Perhaps the time will come when, on the analogy of wireless, we may be able to pick up voices long since silent. Perhaps in future

the working man, sitting at home, may be able at will and for nothing, to listen to the orators of all time and to understand why Burke was familiarly called the dinner-bell of the House of Commons. Heaven help me if, as I doubt, I ever lose my sense of proportion about the age in which I live. But it does seem that the resources of the 20th century at least are unique. But then this is as it should be in the case of each century as it comes, stronger for the centuries before it. I do not mean we ought to think or should be justified in thinking Cobham greater than Drake.

The only disquieting thing about Speed is the question “Where is it going to lead to?” Isn’t it really something of a horrible nature after all? What is the point of this rushing onward? Merely, that we may rush onward again. Isn’t it the sort of thing that drives people mad eventually—this living at high pressure? What does the high pressure do for us

but get higher? Is civilisation such a very unmixed blessing?

I am glad I have got to this. Against some of my suggestions, critics might say, "You wish to do things naturally. You are for going back to the fig-leaf yourself or rather, beyond it." My only reply is, What if in certain matters I am? When civilisation actively violates the laws of Nature in matters like man's health, I think it is bad. Take the instance of child-birth. The people nearest to Nature worry least about this. The dog has a large litter easily. The peasant woman is in childbed one day and in the hayfield the next, without its really having been painful. The fine lady goes through agony (or avoids it) and is in bed for weeks if she survives at all.

I can imagine some historian sketching, as Macaulay has it "the ruins of St. Paul's from London Bridge" saying as Ruskin might "Civilisation and Happiness do not flourish together. But everywhere I see

associated Civilisation and Artificiality; Civilisation, Disease and Madness; Civilisation Degeneracy and Death."

But, like so many of us, Civilisation has its points: the chief of which seems to be that it would be incredibly difficult to get away from. You can only alter the Clock of History by revolution. And people in this country don't see the point of revolution. You can't get rid of all this mechanisation, even though it may be à la Mr. Blunden "poisoning England at her roots." (It is remarkable incidentally to see how large a number of the roots are still frisky even in our thickest industrial areas—let Mr. Blunden buy a car and see. Horrors!) The fact of the matter is that there are 40 million people in this island, who are fed and clothed by machinery. And the funny, comfortable thing about it is, fed and clothed better than their ancestors were without it.

Speed and machinery then, with such developments as the cinematograph and

the master printing press are solid presences among us. Speaking of these last two, from a limited experience of both, I can never see how people can condemn them as wholly bad or wholly good. They are amplifiers of human life which is neither, intensifying it and bringing it to men's notice. They are only good or bad in so far as it is. Papers for instance may be untrue but interesting; true and boring. It is human nature.

Motors may keep us from home and wireless sets from Church. Let us hope that the former will also teach us to appreciate our house more when we are in it, that the latter will stimulate our vicar (God knows he needs it) and that they and the powerful things for which they stand will help us by seeing and hearing more of one another to know ourselves as we should be known.



## JEHOVAH; OR THE FUTURE OF GOD.

With Apologies to Kegan Paul and their series,  
"To-day and To-morrow."

SCIENTISTS argue because we have discovered how man's body works and because we have grasped a fact or two about evolution, we are entitled to declare there is no after life and no such thing as a soul.

Now this sort of thing is not so new as they might think. This sort of thing has been heard before.

Let us ask first, Do they know so very much after all? Can they tell me, for instance, exactly how I think? Can they tell me, if their theory of evolution

is right, how the germs of life began and how the living came from the lifeless in the first place? They will say the world is a product of heat and energy. What has that to do with it? Who ever thought of such a thing as energy? Who made energy energetic?

Do they honestly mean to tell us, as one actually did tell us the other day, that they cannot believe in God "on the evidence of their senses"—in fact that God, to exist and be believed in, would have to be capable of being sniffed, felt or seen by any common or garden boor of a scientist? Just because they believe in test-tubes there is no reason for them to think that a God whom they cannot put in a test-tube or dilute is not fit to be believed in! Some misguided people might even argue the opposite. Some still more misguided ones might actually go so far as to say that the whole point of a God, whether he existed or not, was to be slightly above the common run of sniff-

able mankind — (it is hard to worship what sniffs) — if not to be a thing seen through a glass darkly by the best of men and not dreamt of, nor suitable to be dreamt of in the test-tube philosophy of those who have the audacity to say in public that as a candle's flame goes out if blown out so the soul is likely not to exist! When will they appreciate that we are not discussing commonplaces but what Carlyle calls the unslumbering, invisible, omnipresent God?

We have even heard this sort of reasoning. There is no difference in weight between the body alive and the body newly dead. When we operate upon it, in both cases we find precisely the same organs and precisely the same amount of them. Therefore the soul could not have left the body. All this talk about the after life is hot air. Man invented it because he was afraid of death. That is why people become so much more religious, as they grow older.

Of course, the first idea is childish. No one ever thought the soul would have any weight if it did exist. Does it seem to our friends likely that we, however foolish would worship a God, who was measurable in terms of avoirdupois and the percentage of whom present in any given person might be calculated by a doctor with a knife or a chemist with a pair of scales? Do not they pride themselves on the ("godlike") power of Reason? Can they weigh this? How can they afford to tell us with a pitying smile that death is oblivion, before they die? And if it were, how could they have the face to imagine that this proved the non-existence of God? It is all part of their superiority complex. If they must be material, hasn't it ever struck them that perhaps the best way of immortality of all is to live on in one's children? Or does this idea require too much unselfishness and imagination for them? Their whole argument, being mortal, must be

devoted to proving that man *as he is* cannot be immortal. But then no one ever doubted it. This method of arguing that there is not a soul is as sensible as to maintain that there is one, because some sexually-starved spinster crystal gazes and behaves psychically with the usual hysterical results for the benefit of other silly people. It is certainly not half so sensible as to hold that many of our very ablest and most balanced scientists are on the way to proving the latter on similar but sane lines. One of the two factions of our men of science must be wrong on this point. We wonder which?

My opponents may say, if we cannot disprove God before we die you cannot prove him before you do. I assure them I should never think of trying to prove God to anybody. I am concerned with their attempts to disprove him.

But their second point was a good one. Men are, and always have been afraid of death (with the exception perhaps of

Mr. Bertrand Russell). There is no reason why they should be. Death is a perfectly natural process. We might presume that, unless violent, it will be at least no worse than birth. And did we mind that? Nevertheless all through history, worthy men like the founder of my college, have thought it well to leave a few "pennies" in order that buildings might be in which "poore scholes" should "preye for our soules." Just as the sixpence which we put grudgingly into the plate at Church (and the button which we sometimes have been known to give, when it is a bag) when we are seventeen is more apt to become the eager £5 note which we give at seventy, in that after all the latter has the idea of insurance behind it.

Now one of the reasons I write this, when I do, is because being nearer seventeen than seventy, the scientists ought to admit I had a mind more or less unbiassed in this connection. And I can therefore carry more weight and have greater

pleasure in assuring them that I think there may be more things in heaven and earth than you can get conveniently into a test-tube. And that if they can't see this, it may be the fault of the things in question and it may not.

It has been represented to me that no scientists would argue like this but I put these words in their mouths in order to be unkind to them. Lastly that my main points are hackneyed and have been made before. I can only say that it is a frame of mind which I wish to ridicule. That I honestly believe it is the frame of mind of many scientists. That if, as I trust, it appears ridiculous to them in black and white it is their fault not mine. That I know perfectly well that I am actually quoting the words of some of them. That I am not setting out to be kind to them. That I have the advocate's privilege of raising my voice occasionally and making the most of my chances in order that the jury may see it is a serious matter. If my

points are hackneyed it is because they are good. And if they have been made before with so little result, it is high time that they should be made vigorously, frequently and again.

You—my scientific friends—do not believe in God. What do you believe in? Do you believe in anything? Do you believe in Beauty at all or the love of your mother at all? Of course you do! Do you believe in Nature, Science, History or anything else you like to call it?

If not, don't imagine for a second, my dear good people, that it is anything to be proud of. It is the sort of thing which makes people ask each other to put their head in a bag and keep it there.

But if you do, and I am persuaded that there is hope for you really, don't be so very surprised if you find that God's ways are in some cases even scientific ones! Don't worry yourselves too much

if you can't measure his length and depth  
and height and breadth on your graph  
paper or off it!

That, let us hope, will come.

#### NOTE ON JEHOVAH; OR THE FUTURE OF GOD.

I promise you, gentle reader, that I believed all this, when I wrote it, but I wrote it two years ago. I do not think, at the moment, that I believe in Jehovah myself. I do not see a divine purpose in the forces of nature. While I believe in relative good, I do not think I believe in an absolute God. It is easy to reply that this is due to my inability to see things divine as they should be seen, but belief in anything postulates that however divine it may be, it is yet capable of being believed in by anyone. I am in favour of thinking that things are more what they seem in

the light of day. The mere fact that we did not create ourselves and cannot live for ever, while it is our chief charm and is sufficient to maintain in us that sense of inferiority from which, some think, the idea of a God springs, (it is physically easier, for instance, to pray when we are ill or depressed) is not in my view sufficient to prove the existence of a thing that created us or of purposes for which we were created. Purposes are strangely human.

Faith in any religion, it seems to me, has its poetry but, in proportion as it is complete, must embody some blindness, some selfishness, some narrowness of mind. I do not deny that in many ways Christianity and individual Christians have done good. I cannot blind myself to the fact that they have also done harm. I should feel easier if our average parson could give a satisfactory answer to some such questions as these:—

Do I believe in God because I was

taken to Church as a boy or because anyone except Himself has told me that He exists? Would it be true to say that God exists for me purely because I believe in Him?

Have I ever thought about His existence to the extent of realising that He may not exist? Would it be courageous to consider this possibility or would it be wrong?

How can I prove that I am not an agent of the Devil?

How many times do I use the words "divine mystery" in my intercourse with my fellow men and what exactly do I mean when I do use them?

Did I enter the Church after considering other professions or because no other profession would take me?

These are, perhaps, unfair questions but I think there would be greater reluctance to dogmatise on theology, if many clergy grasped the fact that any conception of God is bound by its very nature to be incapable of logical proof or disproof.

Finally there is no real inconsistency between this note and this essay. Together they boil down to this. If you apply reason to God He seems not to exist but is it possible to apply reason to God?

If, however, there were an inconsistency, even if as is undoubtedly true, the weight of my opinion has changed, how is this more of a reproach to me than it would be to say to a young fowl "You are a chicken" or again "You have altered. You are not what you were. You were once an egg"?

## THE MONASTIC IDEA.

"LIFE is all sacrifice" said my schoolmaster to me the last time we met and for the first time in my life I pitied and admired him at once. He was a thin, modern counterpart of the mediaeval monk, whose conception of God, as set high among the eternal peaks of devotion inspired him to live more and have his being, irrespective of whether it was worth having, purely and simply for the glory of God—and enabled him to say of the world merely "I know none of these things."

And why was he all this? Because he had just reproached me for a bad paper? Certainly not. Because he had been obliged to mortify the flesh for many years as a Fellow and so come to consider

marriage, when physically unfit for it? Hardly that either. Because all our schools and colleges are monastic in origin and monastic in essence? Partly. Because I wondered whether for a man of forty life ought to be all sacrifice? Yes, indeed.

No one denies that mortifying the flesh is impressive and valuable, therefore, as an example. But one is tempted at times to ask, does not an ascetic lose his charity, like everyone else, in proportion as he represses that natural instinct, without which he would never have been an ascetic or anything else? And can he be said to worship God in the fullest sense without attaining in the fullest sense that manhood which God has given him?

The squabbles of the ascetic churchman are in some sense worse than the battles of the tiger. (Nor, quite frankly, does it always seem possible to sublimate sexual passions by adoring the Virgin.) The religion which is evoked through the

mortification of the flesh must be in danger of being contaminated not by the world, but by those abnormalities, which in the opinion not only of sceptics, mortification of the flesh engenders in the brain.

And yet, let us climb for instance through the terraces of marble flowers and saints with polished bronze spears, set in the dazzling blue of a Lombard sky, to the top of some such building as Milan Cathedral. And look down from under the gold wings of St. Jerome's angel at the factories and other mundane considerations, which stretch for a distance unrivalled in Italy all round and are dwarfed into their proper insignificance. Let us then ask ourselves whether the monkish prayers in stone are vain. Certain it is at least that we have nothing half as wonderful now. The modern architect is impressed more by the well-fitted lavatory than by the glory of God or man.

Perhaps they were wrong thus to give God temples made with hands, which challenged comparison with the houses of men. Perhaps we should be better advised to spend our money on beautifying our own homes, introducing God there and learning that he was above the quasi-permanent beauty of a noble building. Perhaps the monks in recognizing that spiritual things could not be materially treated may have forgotten that the body and the spirit are one. Just as they may also have attained a conception of God as far removed from us and our squabbles as the heaven is from the earth—a conception which we are in imminent danger to lose altogether.

## DANCING.

IT was one of those dances, about which there is something vulgar and something sad, behind the frolic, some of which, thank God, undoubtedly is sincere but not all. So that the balloons which look gilt but came from Woolworths' are a bit of a symbol after all. There is a vulgarity generally in the bearing of the "best people" who are trying not to be vulgar, but who would not be vulgar at all if they did not try. There is sadness in the fact that some of these poor creatures are hanging together with pathetically ugly smiles which God knows they can't help. They will go away to work for another year perhaps after to-night, and not see each other again until they come back

next year. And they may be no more able to get married then than they are now and perhaps they will have lost all the mistletoe spirit by then, or by the year after, or perhaps they lost it a year or two ago. But there is this to be thankful for. They can at least forget themselves for to-night and dance with the handsomest people in the room, and after supper dream about them even, because if they didn't forget themselves they would never give themselves away like they do.

## “THE LIGHT THAT NEVER WAS ON SEA OR LAND.”

IT is difficult to exaggerate the suggestiveness of these wonderful lines. The gossamer angel's-wing of a Florentine palette, the old rose of a Cathedral window, the vivid ambers and blues of the playhouse, that warmed the innermost depths of our youthful soul; Shakespear's “Nothing of him that doth fade but doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange”; the vision of him in the Revelation, whose hair was “as white as snow,” whose tongue was “a flashing sword,” whose voice “as the sound of many waters”; and the pathetic, young figure of John Keats, leaning athwart

"some magic casement opening on the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn"; crowd into our minds when we read them.

Man has always striven after light and bright colours. He associates darkness with evil. For he is a self-defensive creature, and in darkness is deprived of his chief weapon of defence—the use of his eyes. The devil is abroad at night.

There have always been gay lights in the sea, on the land and in the minds of dreamers, ever since the fountains of the Duke of Burgundy ran wine, and the stone faces of Monsieur le Marquis turned crimson in the dusk; ever since those same fountains were last seen sparkling, a trifle artificially, round Marly and Versailles; to scintillate ever more faintly through the Galerie des Glaces.

Light plays on the emotions and lends and borrows lustre thereby. Shadows are symbolical of grief:

"As you went from the lawn where the stars were set,

And, embracing the light left the darkness to me,  
There were pangs in my heart I shall never forget"

is an example. We climb at evening to the ruin of some sunlit castle, and it is "in the purpureal pathway of the light," that we stand. We descend to the stream, and it is in "twilight nectar" that the trout appear to swim. We call the marigolds "fairy goblets filled with rosy dew," and it is but a very small part of this splendour, that lies before us amidst the grasses at our feet.

Some day perhaps Mr. Wells will go further, in fiction at least, and devise a machine that will play in symphonies of light and shade, flashy violets and drab greys.

But the light that never was on sea or land is greater than all these. It exceeds the radiance of the sun, as it sinks from glory after glory to the oblivion of the West, or the effulgence of the moon

mirrored in a glacier or a still sea. It partakes rather of the sheen, wherewith the gardens of the blessed are decked.

It is some mirage, some reflection of the Holy City, set among the Pleasant Mountains, the voice crying in the wilderness, the unattainable ideal, the goal of our long striving—sparkling throughout its domes of porphyry and azure with countless brilliances, standing chryselephantine.

## SPEECH TO THE CHARLES FOX ASSOCIATION.

YOU, ladies and gentlemen, have paid the compliment to this Society of asking what justification it has for existence. You have asked, in some cases, why, if it represents the same elements as the other numerous political societies, does it exist at all? Or, in other cases, quite simply, what does it represent?

In answer to the first question I would say it exists because it not only represents the same elements as other societies but it represents all of them, while they represent some and it represents them together while they represent them apart. The other societies stand for certain fixed ideas, which will remain unchanged for much

longer times than the opinion of an intelligent individual; which will remain unchanged, in fact, though circumstances alter. They are societies which think it necessary, for the sake of discipline, to ignore the fact of the law of growth. I like to think that this society stands for a degree of civilisation, which will make what is called necessary discipline—a mere name. I like to think that this society at least will encourage a patriotism which does not exist in the disciplinary obedience in matters of thought of any person to any other persons, with whom if he thought for himself he would not agree. It stands for the belief that there is nothing intrinsically wrong in a change of political views. It stands for the belief that there is nothing intrinsically anarchical in disagreement.

Other societies may adopt certain more or less fixed principles. They hear addresses from people who are confirmed in those principles and become confirmed

in them themselves. But no principle is true in exclusion. A principle which ignores its corollary is a prejudice or, to be plain, if you support one side of a question and think it necessary to ignore the other, you will see neither side as it is.

But some of you have asked me, What does the Charles Fox Association represent? As if in the backs of your minds you could not conceive of a society, which did not represent something. That is perhaps the effect of the Salvation Army. But this Association does, I think, represent something. The President and the Secretary of it have done their best at greater length than myself, to tell you what in their opinion it does represent. But if there is one thing which I am sure they would like you assured that it does not represent, it is the acceptance by all its members of the views of any one of them. Perhaps, however, if I must give you my view, which you are perfectly at liberty to disregard and yet be quite as

good a member of the Society as myself ; I would say simply that it represents the Spirit of Oxford, at its most generous and at its most critical. The Spirit of Oxford cannot rightly be a party spirit. It may even be too idealistic a thing for that. But it is the greatest mistake to imagine that anything influences men so much as ideals. It is a spirit of the intelligent individual. If you tell me that there are already three political societies in Oxford and there is no room for a fourth, I shall reply without hesitation, that there was never room for the three. It is the spirit of the days, when the mind is young and open to impression. It is the spirit which hears all before judging, which judges frequently and humorously, but seldom judges finally at all. It is the spirit of those who are not too serious to have a sense of proportion.

And, if youth is to usurp the office of age and declare perpetually that things are as they should be, instead of actively declaring how they might be better, the

ship of state will be absolutely as much in danger, as it would be were they all violent revolutionaries. It will not sink perhaps but it will be becalmed. Who that sees will dare to tell me that it has yet reached the harbour, "where we would be"? If youth is not to look forward, no one will. If no one does, then, I allow you, there is no point in Oxford, no point in the Charles Fox Association, nor any point in anything else whatever.

This Society stands therefore for youth, intelligent and unafraid, in the belief that youth is by far the most important thing in the world. But it stands for enthusiasm, without standing for frenzy. It is not some hot-headed society for the renovation of mankind in a week. It would never think of laying down an official definition of liberty or anything else, it would never think of ignoring the forces of history, nor of refusing to hear the views of the rhetoricians who do

ignore them. It would never overlook the fact that the present party system at home, and fear system abroad, do work. But it would never dream for a moment that they worked well enough.

"Mr. Fox, sir, has no principles," said an angry King. And now perhaps you will understand me better when I say that, in one sense, this Society too has no principles. It is not bound to fixed and fallible principles but to one universal principle. The principle that toleration is a necessary thing, the principle that love is, even economically, better than hate, the principle that two heads are better than one.

It is not for this Society, I imagine, to look into the present, in order to find facts to justify its own pre-conceived, hard and fast plans and to be blind to facts which do not justify them. It is rather, I hope, for it to see the present in its true perspective, before presuming to make the remotest shred of a plan at all.

## ACTION; AN ENGLISH POEM.

FAR sped from purple-misted Marathon,  
Panic, the sylvan-sent daemon,  
Dusky dim as a shadow pursuing  
Among chattering corpses, livid with steel,  
That riderless, horseless, all unfeeling,  
Blindly endeavouring, giddily reel.  
Fire mingled with the shouts of dying  
men,  
And murmurs that came from darkness,  
Which the turmoil was ever renewing,  
All round echoing, falling to rise again,  
muffled in flight.  
Thus from the eeriness went the god,  
stealing  
Into the sunset, into the whirlwind, into  
the night.

His power like a sapphire, uncertainly  
Sparkling, witting not where to turn  
To an oak-grove in moonlight descended,  
Where a queen prayed steadfastly over  
her spear.  
Cold the mistletoe gleamed, and his spirit  
again,  
Whispering sibilant words in her ear;  
“Betrayed, deceived,” he faltered un-  
manly,  
Bade her desist from her madness  
Cease from a strife she could never see  
ended.  
On the morrow, triumphantly dying with  
poison, she eyed him,  
Happy surpassing conception in pain,  
She had fought through defeat, she had  
scorned and defied him.

Passed the slow aeons 'till the night had  
come  
Panic tossed wines to the people  
Sansculotte had succumbed to his vial  
All that made life of the living was dead.  
The King was a corpse and the frenzy  
lasted  
And the flood-gates opening, the ecstacy  
spread  
For the rape of the universe, ever anon  
Running riot across the sea.  
Till a King who would brook no denial,  
Till a general, bidding his men "pound  
on" gave it nay  
And a pilot still flying flags at the mast-  
head  
Fainted e'er the sword was shriven in  
the rising day.

Last to a soldier's spirit as a dream,  
Clouding the glow of the morning  
Over the battlefield's thick-starred reaches  
Coming with thoughts of dishonour, he  
came.

"O, God, it is good that I stand in silence,  
What is war but a sounding name,  
Bidding man murder for the things that  
seem

Like glory, here there is nothing—  
Seas of blackness and dust that bleaches.  
What is the mede of valour, what is the  
prize for the brave ?

The blossoms of youth that have sprung  
in defiance,  
Or petals of sad-faced tulips that border  
a grave ? "

Whiter the gray grew in the quietness,  
Echoing faint came a trumpet  
As the battle's first pulses were dinning,  
Like the still small voice of a god that  
bade him

Fight, endure for the soul of a nation,  
Curse no more at the hand which made  
him.

Then thunderblack discharge fell riotous.  
*He found that to do was triumph  
To achieve was existence beginning  
And fell in a world of sunrise for the light  
of truth had come*

*In empty places of desolation.*

Lo, there were chariots in the clouds !  
And the god was dumb.

Vasts of eternally-chafing sea-spaces,  
Sphere-shaking, cannon-like, vibrant,  
Overcame his lithe darting-blue trembles,  
And his soul glowed, locked in the western  
dawn,  
*Suffused the fears from his eyes opened wide,*  
*Left them steel-strengthened and newly-*  
*born,*  
*With the light that sparkles in youth fullest*  
*faces.*  
Fled to the earth were his terrors,  
To the dock where a doomed man dis-  
sembles,  
To the lips of a medium, weaving words  
when their time is gone,  
Or the thoughts of a wavering suicide,  
Fled to women, to ends of earth, but the  
god passed on.

## AS THEY ARE.

ONE stood looking out over the college garden, decanting port through a handkerchief of the friend next door into a decanter of the friend next door but one. One was clearly not in chapel and, if asked why not, would have replied that a compulsory conscience could only properly dwell in a Dean, that it was better therefore to be gated than damned, or even damned than gated. One was preparing to "throw a madness," for a Christian was coming to lunch. This entailed shrieking sundry remarks, making peculiar gestures even at the most solemn moments, continually upsetting the salt at table and exclaiming "Dirty" as if in self-reproach, doing everything in fact

which was most calculated to make an earnest person think it was more polite to take no notice and, merely, to make a mental note to the effect that "Verily here was one with a devil"; without of course being in any way rude or wanting to annoy anybody. Thus it was that the Treasurer of the Society for the Propagation of a Sense of Proportion, who was thought by some to take life very seriously (for said they, Why seriously should a man breathe? and why should they?) and was accused by them of writing sentences which only a Rugger Blue could read without taking breath in the middle, "For" said they "he is not funny if you take him seriously and we are far too clever to take breath unless we actually see a full stop and if we see more than three words together and do not take breath, we get flurried and dare not go on to the end for fear we should be able to understand it after all"; spent his spare time.

THE company assembled. The Christian arrived. As in due time the port went round, the Christian said "I've had some peculiar experiences in my time." "No doubt" said the Treasurer smiling broadly. "I suppose I've seen things as they are a little." "And how are things?" said the other. The Christian actually laughed. "I always wonder" he said "why dons lecture on Liberty and write books on reality. I should prefer the opinion of a crossing-sweeper, or a tram-driver in Paris, or the girl in the telephone exchange. It would be shorter and easier to follow. The whole point of the atmosphere in which a don lives is surely that it should be comparatively unreal, I should have thought." What exactly did the man want? thought the company. Was it the conventional "helpful" speech that was to come. One could not be quite sure that this was a conventional person? There was a silence. "These poor people and their families" the

Christian went on. "Two's company.—Three's none, as I say in my advertisement for birth control" said the Treasurer. "No not really. Have some more port." The Christian had some more port and laughed again and looked happy. He was clearly no ordinary Christian. He had no need of fun with the Devil in human shape. Everyone seemed to be expecting him to talk. So he went on. .

"I've always liked dressing up as a tramp. Last night I pursued a friend of mine all down the High without his recognising me. He got more and more annoyed and I begged more and more loudly but got nothing out of him."

"But I really use my tramp's clothes for going down to a doss-house near the docks in London. It almost seems weird to be drinking port in a room like this when only last week I was being stunk out of my wits at this place, where all the absolute out and outs can sleep free. The Salvation Army huts charge 3d. a

night and they're too expensive for our people. So they come to this tumble-down dosshouse to sleep in their stinking clothes, with faces and ways like animals. When I first went the women and men all herded in together, dockers and whores they were mostly and the women used to get passed round all night. Till we separated them—women downstairs men up. None of the men can get pensions. They're ex-thieves a lot of them and they never get work for more than a day or two at a time on the docks. The only way they can forget they're miserable is to get tight. They won't look at anyone dressed like a gentleman, but they were kind to me on the whole and you got to forget the smell and be friendly in time. They were pathetic in trying to offer me things in exchange for looking after them. Most of the whores are awful. They get hags at 25. But there was one who was really decent. And some of the others told her to offer herself to me. It was all

she could do. They had nothing else in the world."

"What did you do?" said someone.

"Gave her a very decent kiss and told her not to be silly."

"The average working-class man, whom I met, who did earn anything had a sense of honour. He would walk out with a girl several times, then have relations with her and, if there was a result, would always marry her. If there was not, they would both be thought free."

"You see some things that would make fashionable ladies fall off the back of their heads. I was telling a holy tea-party about these things once and an elderly woman said 'O but they *like* their slums.' 'Woman!' I said to her."

"Many a time I've stopped under the lions in Trafalgar Square, in the grey light of early morning, after looking for castaways all night and thought of the pity of it all."

"Once I had to go with a man who

had to be sterilised, and one night I shall never be able to forget—a poor woman came to me. She was a dying whore. Blood streamed from her and went all over me. It was quite the most absolutely dreadful thing I ever saw. You could not feel an atom of blame for her—nothing—but that she might have been decent and handsome at that if she'd only had the ghost of a chance. They're all the same. I held her in my arms till she choked and died. Then I absolutely passed out."

"Another time I was in the house of some poor people. The room was filthy. There was a large family and the mother was ill. There was a bundle in the corner, which was a dead child. I was there when a fashionable woman came and 'visited' us."

"She came in with a whiff of scent which was as bad in its way, as the stink of the room and worse in so far as it was meant. 'Isn't the weather perfectly divine?' she said. 'Yes'm' said the

other woman. ‘Is that your boy?’ said the rich young thing, looking suspiciously at my face, as much as to say “I will recognise dirt and I will recognise powder, but its wrong somehow to be just clean!”

‘No’m’ said the woman. ‘I’ve brought you some flowers’ said the lady, as she laid an Arum lily on the bed. ‘Yes’m’ said the other. ‘But I’m afraid I must go now’ said the young thing awkwardly. She was really quite pretty and had probably done the best she could, just as her father tried probably to be as human as one can be, when one sits on a stool six days a week and in a pew on the seventh.”

“That damned bitch” said the poor woman, and I cannot pretend my dear reader that she used any other words when I heard so plainly that she used these. “That damned bitch spends more on one of her petticoats than’d keep us for a week.”

She had vaulted into her superb car by then however. She gave the poor woman

the impression of being happy, but she was probably no more happy than anyone else. It was just part of her sense of God to do things that her upbringing made revolting to her, things that of course might have gone for a lot, if only she'd persuaded herself they were less revolting.. It was part of the sense of honour of both of them not to cry in public. They never dreamed it was possible that sympathy was better than privacy, and even if they had they would never have realised you were allowed to get sympathy in public."

"Prostitution as I see it" said one person, "may not be an ideal but it is an economic necessity and surely it is at least arguable that the greater health of the greater number gains rather than loses by it."

"Why the devil do people talk about ideals when the fact of want is staring them in the face?" The Christian was a trifle peeved. "Why the devil do they

harp on political theories and the forces of economics, when only the least political, least economic action in the world's wanted? The man is hungry. Feed him, even to the extent of being the marginal eater yourself. How can there be anything more in it than this? Does anyone think that but for your will and my will the forces of economics would be forces at all?"

"When I got back to Oxford, my tutor said 'I hope you have spent an agreeable vacation.'"

"It seems so hard to think of it all anywhere, especially in Oxford."

We were still silent.

"I believe in Oxford" someone said at last "but I don't think it does realise them."

"Why should she?" said someone else "the scholar must be aloof. He must be above what is called productive economic work" . . .

"He must therefore be selfish."

"Only in so far as he can only live in an artificially produced society."

"Must not the artificial elevation of his society artificially lower that of these people?"

"Can there be anything but pain for Oxford, if she does realise it?"

"That is rather the point."

"Is this argument going round in a circle?" said the college fool.

"It makes you wonder, quite simply" the other went on "whether there really isn't something wrong about sitting here and drinking port, whilst these things are. Isn't it selfish and cruel to do anything but just rush into the middle of all the brick walls like you did? It makes one feel uneasy."

"We thought we should give you a sense of proportion" said another, "but we are obliged to you for giving us one." The thing slowly passed off.



## “. . . TO SLEEP.”

“TAKE what yer get and doant grouse about what yer doant know,” said the browsy farmer tossing his fork, to the boy who asked if it was going to rain. For it was a fine day and the harvest at present was going well.

All round the churchyard there were signs of life and its own attempt at a sign of death was not very successful. The fact that someone had thought it the best way of getting to heaven, to oppress his last remains deeply into the earth by the weight of a stone angel, whose expression could not but be one with its material, did not make the sun any the less likely to rise to-morrow or the hay any the less worth making. Even though our browsy

friend never troubled to reason it out and even though, when his time came and if he could afford it, he would probably invest in some particularly perpetual angel himself.

The new grave had only a small cross, under a tree, with "requiescat in pace" graven on the stone. If he had known Latin, he might have seen that it meant "rest in peace." If he had read Thackeray he might have remembered his words "Let her rest in peace, let her rest in peace and we too when our troubles and turmoils are over." That is, if he had looked in that direction, but he never did; not because he was callous but because he was wise.

Anyhow the stone angels and brown marble monstrosities had but a poor show of it. The breeze flung wisps of hay in their faces and who can be dignified with wisps of hay in his face.

They would have failed to keep up an appearance of reverence, were it not for

the sound of prayer from within the church. Deliberately the words came. "To give . . . and not to count the cost, . . . to fight . . . and not to heed the wounds, . . . to toil . . . and not to seek for rest, . . . to labour . . . and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will." It was almost indequate to speak at all about the beautiful thing which had been given again to the earth, but the voice seemed in harmony with the strewing about the church of the tints from the old rose window by the afternoon sun. The vicar knelt there with his white head bowed. Obstinate, unimaginative in his faith, but faithful. Dear old man. How well and truly had he fulfilled the prayer himself. How much of his spirit had he lost in the cares of others. God bless him!

But there was no warmth of life, none of the ecstasy of the blood, seldom easily attained or perfectly attainable, despised when unattainable altogether, which re-

veals the divinity of man and woman to each other in the experience of their abundant humanity and drowns by its very warmth all idea of moralities or restraints or unselfishnesses and leaves nothing to obscure that triumphantly sufficient revelation of the vigour of sheer life in expending itself in pleasure or pain, without the possibility of a question of the dis-harmony of the spirit.

There was something of that lack of sentiment, which is cultivated in the society of men, where there is none of that sheer emotion which is able, by intensifying small things, to make friendship abundantly happy and parting utterly miserable.

Nothing in the fields gave the scene any particular meaning. It meant nothing, save that autumn had come, as it had come before and would come again. That the cycle of natural colours yellow, green and brown was still going on in all its beauty.

Nature, if indeed it is possible to speak of such a thing, revealed inevitably her supreme omission. It is a great thing—this absence of comment and akin to understanding. We may be glad or sorry over it. We may disbelieve or believe in God, because of it. We may ignore it or be ignorant of it, or regard it as outside the plane of laughter and tears. But it remains the one absolute criticism on the affairs of man — this silent, passionless implication of Nature — that they are natural.





**DATE DUE**  
DATE DE RETOUR

CARR MCLEAN

38-298

TRENT UNIVERSITY

A standard linear barcode consisting of vertical black lines of varying widths on a white background.

0 1164 0489525 6

